(42)

CHAPTER SEVEN

● 805 527 ROUND about the end of January each year, for our lunar dates do not fall on the same calendar dates every year, we celebrated my father's birthday. All Burmese celebrations have a basis of "doing merit" either in feasting people and perhaps fasting oneself, distributing gifts, or inviting monks to preach and others to hear them. An atmosphere of enjoyment is possible in these good works because Burmese people do not believe in divorcing their praying from their merry-making; usually both are carried out in the same room, the pleasure after the holiness; and the donor feels a great satisfaction of spirit as he says; "*A-hmya a-hmya* : Share with all, share with all (the merit from his good deed)." The friends gathered around reply to this "*Tha-du, tha-du :* Well done, well done."

527 352 On my father's birthday monks were "lifted" or invited to the house for a grand meal. All the Western chairs and tables were moved out of the sitting room; and one end of the room was laid with carpets of red and green rose design, specially kept for such occasions in all Burmese houses. This was for the monks to sit on and facing them the people would sit on mats. Between the monks and people were laid out all the presents for the monastery.

792 192 [431] I was always sad when I saw these presents; to my childish eyes they looked so uninteresting. A monk who renounces worldly goods is allowed to possess only eight articles, three pieces of cloth which form his robes, a begging bowl, a mat, a blade, a needle and a water strainer. Dagas or donators can, therefore, only give these, or other articles necessary to the way of life conforming to their precepts. Such include religious books, mats, candles and matches, brooms, spittoons. These last make very elegant presents, and are a common sight at all distributions of presents, the standard pattern being of white enamel, with a red band around the edge. Children are told of one monastry whose holiness is so high that a spittoon donated to the monks there will echo the name of the donator each time a monk spits into it. With the presents all laid out, the monks walk in in a row, and sit with eyes downcast and legs crossed. My mother and father make obeisance to them and send for us after a few words with the chief monk. We were always nervous and subdued on these occasions; in speaking to a monk a vocabulary of honorifics has to be used, even for "Yes". The hpongyi always made

792 and Grandfather called my cousin Ko Lu Pe to read it. My cousin had
871 been at a government school for some years and though he could read
177. and write English with some ease, he stuck at the word "circumcise".
87 "What!" exploded Grandfather, "five years learning English, and you can't even read a telegram. This education is quite useless." Whereupon he took the grandchildren and his two young sons out of their schools until his wrath subsided and they quietly started attendance again. It is a popular stage joke also, the B.A. who returns to his village and is asked in good faith by the hpongyi to mend a villager's watch that has gone wrong. The graduate confesses that he cannot mend it. The monk is horrified: "What, passed B.A. and cannot mend a watch?"

527 So now on my father's birthday the monks ask jokingly and kindly
792 about our school subjects. Their meal is laid out on a low round table,
574 and consists of all the good things my mother can think of, for they have only one main meal in the day. Rice and meat and vegetable dishes are followed by fruit, sweet milky coffee, sweet English cakes. The monastery boys are given their meal outside; the monks, after eating, rise and go, and the boys follow them bearing away the gifts for the monastery. At once there is a general shuffling into more relaxed positions, conversation swells out, we start to scamper around and help to wheel in more round tables. Then everybody eats, and my father feels a deep sense of well-being.

805 Our lunar calendar has twelve months in its year, beginning the new year about the middle of April with the month of *Tagu*. Each month contains the twenty-nine to thirty days of the moon's cycle, but the dates are numbered with only 15 numbers—15 waxing days starting from the crescent of the new moon: *la-hsan ta-yet, la-hsan hna-yet,* new moon first day, second day and so on, until the 15th and full moon day, *la-pyit nay :* after which come the waning days, *la-hsot*. With this system, we are 12 or 13 days short of the 365 each year, and hence every second year there occurs a double month of *Waso*, in July and August, which month also starts our Lent. Lent lasts the three months of the monsoon, until *Thadingyut*, in October, when we see it out with lights, feasting and
796 much merriment. For the observance of festivals such as New Year
427 and Thadingyut we usually visited relatives, but certain other observances came round each year to us in our own home.

Such is *htamanè-hto*, the making of a comestible known as *htamanè* in vast quantities, for distribution on the first full moon after the harvest. On the full moon night of *Tabodwè* in January-February, the villagers sit up all night in big parties of men and women singing and joking as they make all preparations for the cooking that is to take place by dawn. The basis of htamanè is a glutinous rice called *kaukhnyin*, always

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

551
805
212

The name given thus[1] appears to be entirely a matter of choice; but this is not so. The consonants of the language are divided into groups which are assigned to the days of the week, Sunday having all the vowels to itself. With all respectable families it is an invariable rule that the child's name must begin with one of the letters belonging to the day on which it was born, but within these limits any name may be chosen. As an immediate consequence it follows that a Burman has a birthday every week, a frequency of recurrence which renders the event monotonous, and precludes the friendly amenities of western nations on such occasions.

[527]

The letters of the alphabet are apportioned to the days of the week in the following rough rhyme, which every Burman child can repeat with as much certainty as the English one will display in the recitation of Little Jack Horner:—

Ka, kha, ga, gha, nga, Taninla.
Sa, hsa, za, zha, nya, Ainga.
Ta, hta, da, dha, na, Sane.
Pa, hpa, ba, bha, ma, Kya-thahade.
La, wa, Boddahu.
Ya, ya (the Pali and Arakanese ra), Yahu.
Tha, ha, Thauk-kya.
A, Taninganwe.

That is to say, children born on Monday have for the initial letter of their names, K, Kh, G, Gh, or Ng; for example—Maung, Ngwe Khaing, Mr. Silver Sprig; Maung Gauk, Mr. Crooked; Ma Kwe Yo, Miss or Mrs. Dog's Bone; Ma Khin, Miss or Mrs. Lovable. It will be noticed that in Miss Dog's Bone's names the initial letters of the two words do not agree as to the day. This often occurs, and the first name (Maung and Ma being merely honorary additions) always denotes the birthday. The better class families avoid such a mixing, however, as far as possible.

Tuesday's children have the choice of S or S aspirated (practically the same), Z, Zh, and Ny. For example:—Maung San Nyun, Mr. Beyond Comparison; Maung Po Sin, Mr. Grandfather Elephant; Ma So, Miss or Mrs. Naughty.

[1] [Cf. category 653, p. 3 -- ANALYST]

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

Not only has every day its special character and its five

805 825 782 [527] letters, but there is also a particular animal assigned to symbolise it, and red or yellow wax candles are made in the forms of these animals to be offered at the Pagoda by the pious. Each worshipper offers the creature-candle representing his birthday, or that of any particular friend or relation whom he wishes well. In this way Monday is represented by a tiger; Tuesday, by a lion; Wednesday, by an elephant with tusks; Yahu, by an elephant without tusks; Thursday, by a rat; Friday, by a guinea-pig; Saturday, by a nagā or dragon; Sunday, by a kalôn, the fabulous half-beast, half-bird, which guards one of the terraces of Mount Myinmo (Meru), the centre of the universe.

782 443 Little candles of this kind are to be had at any of the stalls which cluster about the steps and the base of every pagoda in the country, and they are as freely offered as flowers, and fruits, and gold-leaf.

551 553 It will be seen that there is no such thing as a surname among the Burmese. A man may have a dozen sons not one of whom has the same name as his father. Maung, literally "brother," has come to stand practically for "Mister." Po and Shwe and Ba may be applied to any one without regard to his birthday, Shwe implying usually politeness or affection. Nga, used in the English law-courts and by pompous native officials generally, implies superiority claimed by the speaker or writer. Ko denotes friendship, or superior age and dignity in the person addressed. Maung Shwe Than might call himself indifferently—Maung Than, Po Than, Ba Than, Ko Than, Nga Than, or Shwe Than, and might add Maung to any one of these. As a matter of fact most Burmans chop about their name a good deal during their lives. He may begin by being called Lugale Ngè, "Little Wee Man." When he grows up a little the family probably get to call him Lugale Gyi, "Big Little Man." Later, when he begins to think of his appearance and look after the girls—and they begin that sort of thing very early in Burma—he probably calls himself Maung Lugale or Shwe Lugale, "Mr. Littleman," or "Mr. Boy," or "Golden Boy." There are a variety of other changes possible and likely. Finally, when he reaches the age of thirty-five or forty he either readopts the original Ngè and calls himself

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

required about the monastery. This done, the day-scholars go home and have their dinner, a few of the boarders perhaps gaining permission to do the same. The ko-yins, being under monastic discipline, are obliged to fast like their superiors. Most of them, and some few of the pon-gyis, go out for a staid and solemn walk round the village and out to the pagoda. Then, at sunset, the unmelodious, far-reaching notes of the kaladet summon all back to the kyaung. The strollers return immediately. None wearing the yellow robe may be without the monastery limits after the sun goes down, which occurs throughout the whole year close upon six o'clock. A short time afterwards the scholars are summoned before the abbot or some of the pon-gyis and recite steadily all that they have learned, from the Thin-bôn-gyi up to the book they have last committed to memory. If the kyaung is large and there are a number of students, this thorough process is, however, modified, and only the work at the moment being learned is required of the pupils. The Pali rituals are chanted with spasmodic energy, abundance of sound in most cases doing duty for a just comprehension of the matter. Very few of the religious could string a sentence together in Pali, far less speak the language, yet most of them can pour forth homilies and dogmata for hours on end, so that the poor ko-yins are not to be scoffed at for their parrot-like volubility. When this examination is over, if the sayā is an enthusiast, or if there is time, that dignitary himself delivers a sermon, or gives an exposition of some knotty passage, or perhaps there is a general conversation on some question of doctrine, or other subject of ecclesiastical interest at the moment.

Thus the time passes away till half-past eight or nine, when the evening is closed with devotions in the presence of the image of the Buddha. All assemble according to their rank as in the morning, and together intone the vesper lauds. When the last sounds of the mournful chant have died away in the dimly-lighted chamber, one of the novices, or a clever scholar, stands up, and with a loud voice proclaims the hour, the day of the week, the day of the month, and the number of the year. Then all shikho before the Buddha thrice, and thrice before the abbot, and retire to rest. None who

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

585 805 sp on, all satisfactorily arranged, the formalities are not yet over. A lucky day has to be sought from the horoscopes of the two chief parties, but beyond this there are a number of obstacles which must on no account be overlooked. In the first place, with the pious the same rule prevails as in England, that no marriages should take place in Lent. This cuts upwards of three months out of the year immediately. Unfortunately a number of persons are so completely in the world of kāma, the seat of the passions, that they care very little whether it is the season of the Wā or not. But almost every one, whether pious or not, considers well the character of the months as given in the marriage linga. The year begins with Tagu, commencing about the middle of April. In this month and Kasôn the next, couples marrying will be very rich. In Nayôn they will love one another. Those marrying in Waso and Wagaung, when Lent begins, will die or be grievously sick. If the young pair are so mad as to brave the danger, their parents should stop the marriage. In Tawthalin, Na'daw, and Pyatho, if you marry, you will lose goods and money. In Thadingyut you will have slaves, children, and money as much as you want. In Tasaungmôn slaves, buffaloes, cattle, and furniture in abundance, will flow in upon the married couple. Tabodwè and Tabaung are very unlucky for those who tempt Hymen. There will be no children, or only girls, and misfortunes will 587 be frequent. Nevertheless though there is all this trouble in getting a wife to your mind, as well as lucky in time of birth, worldly goods, and season of marriage, there are very few Burmans, not in the sacred order, who are not married before they are twenty, and happily married too. As the popular saying puts it—

Ye hnin nga,
Lin hnin maya.

Fish to the water,
Man to Eve's daughter.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

785 792 are no revolting self-inflicted penances such as are regarded as meritorious in themselves by the followers of the Hindu creed. Fasts and penitential deeds are indeed recommended to those living in the world, but that is because such methods are the best means for weakening the passions, and increasing the power of the spirit as against the flesh. They are not a part of perfection. They are not even on the direct way to the attainment of perfection. That is only to be achieved by meditation, by pondering on the various aspects of the substances and truths in the world. Therefore the pyin-sin do not make any difference, except in the case of the very austere, in the observance of the appointed duty days, during which it is incumbent on the laity to abstain from food up till mid-day. After noontide the yahan never eats. Considerable scandal is sometimes caused by the tricks of sundry of the weaker vessels. They sit all day with their back to the sun, and if in the afternoon they feel hungry, they ask a scholar if it is yet noon. The wily kyaung-tha, thinking to escape a thrashing on the morrow, promptly answers that it is a good way off twelve o'clock yet, and brings wherewithal to solace the hungry religious. The falsehood, or *suppressio veri*, on the part of the scholar is a venial offence at his age, and the yahan escapes sin, for if he breaks the law it is ● 805 because he was deceived. Again, Englishmen are often puzzled to know, in a country where, even now, clocks are by no means common, and where they are found, usually show the wrong time, how it is that the people know what o'clock it is. The matter is simple enough when the sun is to be seen, for its course is pretty nearly the same all the year round, and the Burman is tolerably skilled in guessing the time from its height or from the length of the shadows thrown. But it is different during the rainy season, when the sun is often not to be seen for weeks at a time. Here, however, so say the yahans, whom it most seriously concerns, a singular dispensation of nature steps in to their aid. The cocks and hens of Buddhist countries are not as the tame villatic fowl of Western lands. I do not refer to their powers of flying, which are sufficiently irritating to hungry life-taking voyagers, but to the fact that the cocks crow at stated hours, four times a day—at sunrise, noon, sundown, and midnight.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805 ●

They thus inform the inmates of the kyaung when they must cease eating for the day, and enable them to obey the provisions of the Patimauk. This useful acquirement of the Buddhist chanticleer was acquired in a singular way. Sundry books of the Bedin were burnt as containing unlawful cabalistic teachings. Among these was the Ā-tappana Bedin. When the fire had died out the barn-door flock came and pecked at the ashes, and so assimilated the astronomic lore contained in the book. I never had the opportunity of watching any particular cock to see if he actually crowed four times a day at the times reported. They fly about so, that for purposes of observation they might just as well be jungle fowl.

792

Thus even the powers of nature conspire for the well-being of the monks. It has been shown how the laity provide them with food and splendid dwellings. It may be unhesitatingly asserted that the most luscious fruits and the most delicate viands all find their way to the monasteries. A single instance will show to what an extent this is carried. In jungle places, where in the dry season there is often a great dearth of water, one spring is always set apart for the kyaung, because it would be a great sin, as well as being unpleasant for the yahan, to drink water which had been stirred up, and for that reason would be more likely to contain animal life. This reservation often compels the entire village to walk a mile or more for a supply of water, a very serious inconvenience to the easy-going Burman. In order that strangers and passers-by may have no excuse for drinking from the monastic well, a yellow cloth is hung over it from a bush or a post erected for the purpose. Here again a stumbling-block and stone of offence is set up in the way of the ignorant or unreflecting foreigner.

792
312

792
798

Everything near the monastery is rendered sacred, not merely when it is enclosed in the parawun, but as far as the prior may choose to proclaim it. This is especially common in the case of the large tanks or bricked reservoirs which the pious dig in many parts of the country. These are frequently well stocked with fish and turtle, and when the monks declare them sacred, the fish often become wonderfully tame from the abundant food that is brought them by yahans

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

could afford so much as this. The best engagements are those known as ahlu pwè, given by a rich man in celebration of some religious festival, or to commemorate some event in his family, such as the donning by his son of the yellow robes of the monastery. The elders of the village, or the custodians of the pagoda, often collect money for the performance of some of the religious zāts, depicting avatars of the Lord Buddha. Then there are subscription pwès, where some energetic lover of the drama suggests the propriety of a play to the inhabitants of the village, or of a street in the town. He goes round gathering subscriptions, and then negotiates with the zat-ôk for as many nights as the manager is inclined to give for the money. This system has unfortunately led to abuses. Sharp individuals have discovered the possibility of collecting three or four hundred rupees among the people, paying the manager two hundred out of this, and keeping the rest for themselves. The dodge has been too often tried in Rangoon, but in the smaller towns it is still practicable, and is far too often carried out. Besides these performances by accredited companies, there are others called kyigyin pwè, given by professionals anxious to make a name for themselves, and for this purpose giving gratuitous exhibitions. These are naturally very uneven from the difficulty of getting a complete company together. But in all cases the vast majority of the spectators pay nothing at all. The guests invited by packets of le'hpet usually contribute a rupee or two towards the expenses of their host, but otherwise the entire cost is defrayed by him.

The pwè is begun by the arrival of the band, which, with characteristic Burmese disregard of the value of time, ordinarily comes upon the scene several hours before the actual commencement of operations. They occupy one side of the stage, and tune up their saing and play away vigorously while the people gather. The zatthama and zatthamā, the male and female artistes, drop in casually along with the spectators. Each is ordinarily accompanied by a servant to carry their dresses and help them in robing. All of them, women as well as men, make their preparations in full view of everybody. Each lady has a toilette-box with all the necessaries for making up. Many are the hints the village

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XXXV

THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST

ALTHOUGH religious festivals and *fêtes* are so abundant in Burma, it is undoubtedly true that none of them are universally observed in all parts of the country, except the New Year's Feast. In localities where the people are exceptionally pious, the end of Lent may be more carefully observed than elsewhere, some devoting themselves especially to pious observances, others to the more worldly ceremonies of the sôndawgyi feast. The Tawadeintha festival is an annual observance in some districts, in others it practically passes over unnoticed. Similarly with all the minor *fêtes*. But it is not so with the thi'gyan pwè. All over Burma, from the smallest jungle hamlet to the crowded streets of Rangoon and the straggling suburbs of Mandalay, the New Year is ushered in with the old formalities, and with perennial enthusiasm. Not an hour is cut off from the allotted number of days, and every item of the old practice is carried out with the same vigour.

For this reason the "Water Feast," as it is called by Englishmen, has forced itself on the attention of the most careless observer, and every one who has written about Burma devotes a greater or less amount of space to a description of the good-humoured merriment with which the New Year is introduced. I do not propose, therefore, to do more than allude to the lesser known formalities observed on the occasion.

The month Tagoo, the first of the Burman year, occurs in the spring, and New Year's Day is in the earlier half of April. But it does not fall annually on the same day. It

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805

is a movable feast, and the date of the commencement of the year was regularly fixed by the royal astrologers in Mandalay, who made a variety of intricate calculations, based on the position of various constellations. Since the annexation the duty of fixing the date of the new year has fallen on the Chief Secretary to the Local Government. The object is to determine at what time the king of the thagyās will descend upon earth, for it is his arrival which will inaugurate the year. The Dêwa king is fairly punctual, and the descent occurs always between the 9th and 12th of April. For some few years he has appeared on the 11th, and scoffers in Rangoon declare that he will probably continue to do so to save the pônnas trouble. These gentlemen annually draw up a thi'gyan sah, a kind of prophetic almanac for the year, relating what is likely to happen, and whether it will be prosperous or not. These vaticinations depend upon a variety of circumstances. The tha-gyā min may come down wielding a spear, when there will be disturbances in the land; a water-jar, when the rains will be abundant and the crops good, a torch or a simple staff.

805
787

It is from those objects that he bears with him, all of which are ascertained by previous inspection of the heavens and comparison with ancient precedents, that the astrologers are able to determine the exact time when the descent will be made. Other particulars are learned from the animals on which the nat-king rides. Sometimes he has a cow or a buffalo for a mount; at other times he bestrides a nagā, when there are sure to be very heavy rains; a galôn, on the other hand, presages violent squalls and atmospheric disturbances. When the tha-gyā min goes on foot with a lantern in his hand and shoes on his feet, it is a sign that the heat will be very great and prolonged. Besides this the king of the superior heavens, the Bumazonat, the spirit guardian of the earth, exercises also a considerable influence on the coming year, though he has nothing to do with its commencement. The pônnas, therefore, are at great pains to find out his exact position at the beginning of the month Tagu—whether in the trees, the flowers, or the paddy stubble. Each of these temporary habitations has its special signification, and the discovery of them is not only valuable

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805 ●
787

in itself, but serves as a most satisfactory corroboration of the truth of the events prognosticated by the movements and surroundings of the tha-gyā king. The conclusions are all carefully noted down in the thi'gyan sa, and great piles of these are carefully preserved in the archives of the monkish library, seldom to be looked at again.

[247]

Besides the events which are to happen in the coming year the astrologers are also able to determine whether the tha-gyā min will remain three days or four days upon earth. If he stays three days it is called a matulè year, if four, tawtulè, and the water-throwing is carried on a corresponding time.

805
527

All these points are settled some time beforehand, so that every one in the remotest part of the country may have due notice, and then information is sent to the heads of monasteries, and the chief districts, and all is made ready to receive his nat-majesty with proper honours. When at last the day comes round, all are on the watch, and when the wise men give the signal, tha-gyā min kyabyi, the king has come down, a cannon is fired off, and forthwith all the people come out of doors with pots full of water, the mouths of the jars filled up with fresh green leaves and twigs of the sacred tha-bye tree. A formal prayer is said, and the water is poured out on the ground, and all are happy. Many years ago an event happened which singularly impressed true believers in the royal city. Just when expectation was at its highest and all ears were strained in expectation of the roar of the cannon, there was a terrific thunderclap, which made all the town quiver, and demonstrated the accuracy of the pônnas' calculations. There was no more thunder that night, and the ranks of the pious received great increase during the ensuing week. In country towns and villages every one who has a gun rushes out into the street at the appointed hour and fires it off. Most wonderful blunderbusses and old flintlocks and ancient rusty horse-pistols make their appearance, warranted to make a noise, but capable of little more. After this ceremony is over a few go to bed,—for the descent is usually made at midnight,—but the majority sit up and talk.

With the earliest glimmer of light all rise, and taking

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805 527 pots full of fresh clean water, carry them off to the monastery to present them to the monks—not to throw over them, such liberties are never taken with the brethren. After having 783 527 made their kadaw, "begged pardon with water," to the sacred order, they set off to the pagoda and there com- 805 mence the yethôn pwè, the washing of the images. It is not to be supposed that these really require cleansing any more than the recluses do, but it renders them myatta-thappè, an expression not to be rendered by many words in English. It combines all the meanings of cleanliness, beauty, stateliness, proper position, majesty, and repose; and the laving with water is merely a recognition of this fact. The work is usually done by women, and they reverently clamber up and capsize their silver and earthenware goblets of water over the placid features. There are scores of them at work, and the ceremony is soon finished. Then all set off home again, and the jovial part of the festivities begin. All along the road are urchins with squirts and syringes, made of tin and bamboo, with which they have been furtively practising for the last few days, and their experience develops itself in extreme accuracy in catching you with a stream of water in the ear. Young men and girls salute one another mostly with cups and goblets of water, and stifled screams and shouts of merriment rise everywhere. Before breakfast every one is soaked, but no one changes, for it is fine warm weather, and there is lots more water to come.

805 527 During the day there is a regular going round to pay the compliments of the season. It was a great kadaw day in the palace at Mandalay, and all the nobles and officials went to "beg-pardon," and worship at the golden feet—not with water, however. Similarly inferiors pay their respects to their superiors and masters, children to their parents, scholars to their teachers, and juniors generally to seniors There is water everywhere, more especially on those parts of your dress which cling most uncomfortably to you. The girls are the most enthusiastic in the matter, and as they generally go in bands and have a copious reservoir in the shape of big jars along with them, the unprotected male is routed in no time. Some zealous people go down to the river or creek, wade into the water knee-deep, and splash

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 API Burma
Burmese AP4

805 S27 [576]

water at one another till they are tired and the thing begins to seem monotonous. No one escapes; in fact no one would care to get through the three days with dry clothes, for the wetting is considered a compliment. A clerk comes up to his master, shikhos to him, and gravely pours the contents of a silver cup down the back of his neck, saying ye-kadaw mi, "I will do homage to you with water." A polite but less humble form of speech is ye-laung-thi, to "pour" water over; while equals, and the young people generally, yepetthi, "splash" one another with the utmost vigour. It is to be observed that dirty water is never used. The barbaric innovation of squirts is a sign of decadence.

Foreigners do not object to the custom, except perhaps some of the more pompous and stolid natives of India, whose minds are incapable of appreciating a joke in any form whatever. The rollicking Chinaman takes it up with the utmost zeal, and sets about the thing in the most business-like way. The last time I was in Maulmein one of the storekeepers in the main street had rigged up a garden hydrant in front of his house and connected it with the well. A coolie was engaged to work it all day, and a continuous jet of water, sufficient to put out a small conflagration, streamed from the nozzle the entire duration of the feast. Not only was Boon Tek enabled to drench everybody, but he advertised his machines and made a good thing of it.

But the Chinaman was exceeded in zeal by a young Englishman in Prome, not many years ago. He was a Government official, and there were two friends dining with him. A note came round to him from a neighbour in the next street saying that the yepetthi girls were out and would be round his way shortly. So he forthwith made preparations. The Madrasi "boys" got a huge bath tub on to the verandah, and tin pannikins were placed handy, and the dinner proceeded. But unfortunately there was no one put to watch for the arrival of the girls, and the first notice of their appearance was a well-directed stream of water in the nearest man's shirt-front. To sally forth was the work of an instant, but it was found that the tub was in the possession of the enemy, and only served to eke out the abundant

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805
527

supply they had brought with them in big silver bowls. The three Englishmen were soaked through at the first discharge. But the Assistant Commissioner was not to be discomfited so easily. He rushed through a perfect cascade, and seizing the first damsel he came across, incontinently plunged her in the bathing-tub and soused her under. This filled the rest with dismay, and they forthwith took to their heels and ran, followed as speedily as her clinging garments would permit by the offended beauty who had been so unceremoniously treated. The occurrence was rather unfortunate, for the girls were all daughters of some of the principal Burmans in the town, and it is a very grave impropriety for a man to lay hands on a woman even in joke; how much more to duck her in a wash-tub and wet all her hair! That young official had no more compliments paid him at New Year's time, to his own loudly expressed regret.

The most ludicrous story I have heard on the subject of the water-feast may serve as a warning to Englishmen who arrive in Burma in April. The victim reached Rangoon on the second day of the water-feast, and having no Indian outfit got himself up in a tall hat, frock-coat, and the rest, to go and present a letter of introduction. After much trouble and irritation, caused by the meanderings of his ghari-wallah, not by any means alleviated by the heat—for the sun is usually at its hottest in April—he arrived at the desired house, and proceeded upstairs. On the verandah he found three or four Burmese girls, who forthwith asked permission to throw water on him. He naturally supposed they were asking whether he wanted to see the master of the house, and nodded violently. Whereupon they capsized their bowls of water over him, including the hat in the libation. The astonished man took it to be a custom of the country to cool down over-heated foreigners, but thought the inclusion of his hat an unnecessary detail. Just then the owner of the house appeared, having retired previously to get some money to buy himself off a ducking, and having been informed of the state of affairs, burst into a fit of such violent laughter at the griff's notion of the ceremony as roused in the latter a wrath so fiery that it almost dried him again.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

527 302 643

only from the stranger's land, but so many miles through alien waters, and so it was necessary to seek for another place. Where could a better be found than the mighty Irrawaddy itself? Accordingly from then on till there ceased to be a king of Burma, the necessary amount was drawn from the centre of the river by the Ye-kyi-wun, a minister specially appointed for that purpose.

527 177

As in so many other cases the amenities of the thi'gyan pwè have led to the extorting of money. In the good old days, and in the country districts still, it was the practice for benevolent people to keep open house, and give food and dainties to all passers-by, with tea and flavoured drinks, cheroots and betel for those that preferred them. To lighten the expense, contributions, called kèbo, were invited from friends and neighbours, and out of this has sprung the system of blackmail prevalent in Rangoon. A bevy of girls go into an Englishman's house and sprinkle him with lavender-water, or the moss-rose bouquet, so much in favour with Burmese belles. After a little badinage, they produce plain water, and threaten further operations unless something is given them. This they usually get, and if Englishmen complain of shameless extortion it is their own fault. The fair speculators are not such as any respectable girl would care to be seen with, and the prettinesses with scents are no more national than the scents are themselves. A provincial beauty would infinitely prefer a good honest ducking with vulgar water to the mawkish sentimentality of *eau de Cologne*. Some of the results of superior civilisation are very undesirable.

805 527

On the final day of the feast a gun is fired at noon to signalise the ascent of the thi'gya min to his happy realms again, and then all is over. The squirts are laid by for another year; clothes are hung up to dry, and nothing remains but to wait and see whether the pônnas are more successful than usual in their prognostications for the year.

805 527 773

The origin of the custom is no doubt the rain-making, described by Professor J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, but the Burmese explain it by a legend. The thi'gya min had a bet with a rival and the loser lost his head. This could not be allowed to be defiled by touching the ground, so it was caught by a daughter of Natdewas. Seven of them take it

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805
527
773

in turn to hold the head, and when the head passes from one goddess to another the New Year begins. The head is burning hot, and has to be cooled with pouring on of water. This is recalled by the splashing of one's neighbour with water at the New Year time.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

PJ 471

CHAPTER L

KING THIBAW

III.—A KADAW DAY

644
305

"THE princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together and fell down and worshipped at what time they heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music."

That is an exact description of the course of proceedings in Mandalay on a kadaw day. The gentlemen of the court and band as aforesaid, in the plain of Dura, must have greatly resembled Thibaw's worshippers, though it would be unfair to compare Nebuchadnezzar with the feckless last king of the Burmans. A kadaw-né means, literally translated, "a beg-pardon day." On such occasions all the officials, the tributary chiefs, and most eminent men in the country have to come to the palace and do homage and worship at the Golden Feet. There may be as many "Beg-pardon Days" during the year as his majesty pleases, but the most regular and best-attended, as well as the most brilliant, are always at the beginning and end of Lent, which extends, roughly speaking, from June to October. The end of Lent is probably the greatest occasion of all, and the audience sometimes, as was the case in 1880, extends over three days.

During Lent, every one is supposed to fast and be pious and improve his mind generally. On the conclusion of such a period, therefore, it is fitting that all loyal subjects should renew their allegiance to the Great Lord of Righteousness,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

644 805 [431] and prostrate themselves with humble regard at his magnificent feet. The giving of presents or kadaw—no one can go near the king without a present—is represented as a deprecatory offering to avert deserved punishment for offences.

644 The whole town is *en fête* on such occasions. The Lord Mayor's show, or the transformation scene in a pantomime, which are the stay-at-home Englishman's idea of supreme magnificence, are as nothing compared to the procession round the moat which encircles the city walls. Mingyis, Atwinwuns, Sawbwas, Myosas; officials and vassals in formidable numbers and with terrible names; each man accompanied and adorned with his utmost possessions in the way of man, beast, gauds, and raiment, file proudly round preparatory to entering the palace. The description of a prince's order of going may suffice to give an idea of the whole. First come the lictors, prancing along with their fasces and hoarse shoutings, yelling to everybody to clear the way, regardless of the fact that the populace is all down on its knees by the side of the road, shikhoing reverentially. They are about half a dozen in number, and to a short-sighted man appear to be stark naked. A closer inspection with a glass, however, reveals the fact that they have some regard for decency, if they have little for anything else. Behind them comes the family band, braying, and clashing, and skirling its loudest. Undisturbed by the din, stalk composedly in the rear half a dozen elephants, the first couple splendid tuskers, in complete war-array, with fighting howdahs on their backs, and brilliant housings trailing to the ground; the second pair with ordinary furnishings, and the others with no further encumbrance than the mahaut on their backs. As near to these as their syces can persuade them to go, caper a number of led horses, harnessed with gay scarlet saddles, and saddle flaps, with tassels of the same colour sweeping the earth. Immediately in their rear is a bright-hued cloud of retainers, armed with guns, spears, and swords, and many carrying fans of all sorts and sizes. Floating over their head like a great red cloud, is the prince's wide satin-fringed umbrella, or perhaps it may be a gold one, if he enjoys his master's favour. Then there is a rabble of

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER LIX

ERAS, COMPUTATION OF TIME, WEIGHT, ETC.

805

BURMESE chronology recognises five different eras, only the last of which, however, is ever practically used. These are:—

1. The Kawza era, which was abolished by Shin Gautama's grandfather. It had extended over 8650 years, and came to an end in the year 691 before the Christian era.

2. Bodaw Insana, the Buddha's grandfather, then established an era of his own. It lasted only 148 years, or till 543 B.C., in which year Shin Gautama died.

3. The Religious era. Fixed by Ayatsthat, King of Magadha in India, dating from the death of the most excellent payá, and current till A.D. 82.

4. King Thamóddayit's era, established by that monarch in A.D. 82 at Prome, and lasting till A.D. 639, or for a period of 562 years.

5. The current era, established by the Yahan Póppasaw, when he usurped the throne of Pagán in A.D. 639. The year 1244 of this era begins in April 1882.

The changing of the eras was in most cases to avoid calamities, threatened for certain years by old prophecies, and in a few instances of eras which gained no permanent place, merely for the sake of gratifying royal vanity.

The ordinary year consists of twelve lunar months, of twenty-nine and thirty days alternately. Every third year a thirteenth month is intercalated between the fourth and fifth. The date on which the year begins in the month of April was determined by the calculations of the royal astrologers in Mandalay, and published throughout the country by the póngyis and district officials. The Chief Secretary

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

● 805 to the Burma Government now fixes the day. He consults the astrologers theoretically and sees that it is suitable for the polo tournament at Maymyo, the hot weather headquarters of the local government.

The months, with their corresponding English equivalents, are as follows:—

Tagu	about April.
Kasôn	„ May.
Nayôn	„ June.
Waso	„ July.

(A second, a Dutiya Waso, intercalated every third year.)

Wagaung	about August.
Tawthalin	„ September.
Thadingyut	„ October.
Tasaungmôn	„ November.
Na'daw	„ December.
Pyatho	„ January.
Tabodwè	„ February.
Tabaung	„ March.

The days are not counted right through the month as in the European system, but as with a watch, or as with the "day" itself, the month is divided into two parts: the la-san, or waxing moon, which lasts from the first to the la-byi, the full moon; and from the following day, the 16th, to the end of the month (the la-gwè) comes the waning, la-sôk or la-byigyaw.

Besides this there is a division corresponding to that into weeks in the European system. The seven days are named after the eight planets, or astrological houses. Sunday is Taninganwe (the day of the Ne Yawi or Sun); Monday, Taninla (from La, or Sanda, the Moon); Tuesday, Inga (from Inga, Mars); Wednesday, from one in the morning till noon, Bôddahu (Bôdda, Mercury); the rest of Wednesday, from mid-day till midnight, Yahu (from the dark planet of the same name, a monstrous foul nat, who strives to swallow the sun and moon, and causes partial eclipses by licking and pawing them; once every three years he attacks the sun, and once in six months the moon); Thursday, Kyathabadé (from Prispati, or Pyèpati, Jupiter);

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

805

Friday, Thaukkya (from Thaukkya, Venus); Saturday, Sané (from Thawri, Saturn). The selection of the planets to denote the days of the week by races so different now, whatever they may originally have been, as the Chinese, Scandinavians, Greeks, and all the Mohammedan tribes, is singular.

For ordinary purposes the day and the night are divided into four periods of three hours each: from six to nine, which is called ta-chetti, the first watch, one blow; twelve o'clock, the next quarter, is announced by hni'-chetti, the second watch, two blows; three o'clock, thôn-chetti, the third watch, three blows; and six, le-chetti, the fourth watch, four blows. These hours were sounded in Mandalay by alternate beating on a huge gong and drum placed in the clock-tower by the eastern gate; and at le-chetti, sundown or sunrise, the palace gates were closed, or opened, as the case might be. Noon is styled môn, and midnight tha'gaung; and the word byan is added in the sense of the English P.M. Thus nayi byan thôn-chetti would be 3 P.M.

In English territory of course the English system has been adopted, and now prevails over the whole country, Upper and Lower. For astronomical purposes, such as the casting of the horoscope and the calculations for fortunate days and the like, an exceedingly elaborate scale exists, but it is never made use of in ordinary life, though references to it in religious books are not uncommon. The unit is a naya. This is the period of time in which ten flashes of lightning may take place, or the time it takes to wink the eye ten times, or to throw out the arm as often. [787]

4 Naya	are equivalent to one		Kanā, an "instant."
12 Kanā	"	"	Kayā.
10 Kayā	"	"	Pyan.
6 Pyan	"	"	Bizana.
15 Bizana	"	"	Pad.
4 Pad	"	"	Nayi, an "hour."
60 Nayi	"	"	Yet, a day and night.
15 Yet	"	"	Bekkha, or side (of the moon) a half month.
2 Bekkha	"	"	La, a month.
12 La	"	"	Hnit, a year.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Besides the ordinary names given above for the twelve months, the soothsayers, for the sake of the increased learning it seems to give them, are accustomed to refer to the months by the names of the twelve signs of the zodiac called Yathi.

Thus Tagu is known as Meittha, the ram.

„	Kasôn	„	Pyeittha, the bull.
„	Nayôn	„	Medôn, the union of the procreating powers of the male and female.
„	Waso	„	Karakat, the crab.
„	Wagaung	„	Thein, the lion.
„	Tawthalin	„	Kan, the virgin.
„	Thadingyut	„	Tu, the scales.
„	Tasaungmôn	„	Pyeitsa, the scorpion.
„	Na'daw	„	Nu, the bow.
„	Pyatho	„	Makāya, the sea monster.
„	Tabodwè	„	Kôn, the water-pot.
„	Tabaung	„	Mein, the fish.

There are reckoned to be three seasons, the cold, the hot, and the wet.

The cold season, saung-dwin, heman, or hemanta utu, lasts from the first of the waning of Tasaungmôn to the first of the waning of Tabaung, from the end of November to the beginning of March.

The hot season, nwe, geman, or gemanta utu, lasts from the first of the waning of Tabaung to the first of the waning of Waso, from the beginning of March to the beginning of July.

The wet season, mo, wathan, or wathanta utu, lasts from the first of the waning of Waso to the first of the waning of Tasaungmôn, from the beginning of July to the end of November.

This is a very hard and fast division, but it is fairly accurate. The cold weather is, however, only perceptible in the early morning. Fifty degrees is about the lowest known in Rangoon, but it is colder in other stations. Still you have to journey beyond Bhamaw in the north before you come to the region of duck frosts. There is no mistake

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

about the rains. In Rangoon the annual average rainfall is a hundred inches, but in Maulmein, Akyab, and other towns considerably over twice that amount is registered. In Rangoon, on 3rd November 1879, between one o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon eleven inches fell. Happily this sort of thing is not usual.

In Mandalay, time was calculated by means of a water-clock, which stood in the bo-ho, the clock-tower by the eastern gate, where were also the gong and drum on which the watches were sounded by one, two, three, or four alternate blows. The water-clock is a simple enough affair. It consists of nothing more than a large vessel filled with water, in which cups are placed, perforated so that an hour—a Burmese nayi—elapses before they sink to the bottom. It is only at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes that the hours of the day and night are equal. At other times they vary, and the Burmans make a great fuss over their complicated calculations. In July the days are longest with thirty-six hours, the night only lasting twenty-four, while these figures are exactly reversed in January. Any inaccuracy in Burmese computations arises from the loss of the fourth book of Bedin (the Indian Vedas), which was destroyed in the bonfire made by the religious of all fishing-nets, snares, weapons of war, and such writings as are denounced in the sacred books. It was by pecking at the ashes of this volume that the domestic fowls of Burma acquired that astronomical lore which induces them to crow all together at midnight (tha'gaung kyet).

It is only, however, in the capital that the water-clock is found, and in the rest of the country, and especially in all the smaller villages and towns, time is only roughly indicated by a reference to the position of the sun or the moon, or to certain daily occurrences taking place at fixed times, as "in the morning when the sun was a span above the horizon"; or "when the sun was as high as a toddy-palm"; "before the sky was light"; "when the light gets strength" about half-past five; "the earliest cock-crowing time"; "when the monks go a-begging," that is to say, six or seven in the morning, according to the custom of the local monastery; "monks' returning time," usually about eight, but varying,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

of course, with the charity of the neighbourhood; "breakfast time," usually eight o'clock; "dinner time," about five; "after mid-day"; "sky-closing time" about 6 P.M.; "brothers don't know each other time," that is, just after dark; "when the lamps are lighted"; "children's go-to-bed time," about eight o'clock; "lads go courting time," about the same period; "when grown-up people lay their heads down," ten o'clock in the country, twelve with the kālathas of the towns; "all the world quiet time"; tha'gaung gyaw, "the wee short hour ayont the twal'"; when "the iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve," as Shakespeare has it; a-yôn kyè-ni paw, "when the red star rises,"—all these and a multitude of others are in common everyday use, and from the simple habits of the people, and their own graphic force, are quite sufficient to mark the desired time and ensure punctuality. Many can tell the time simply by looking at their own shadow. Burmans not being yet affected by this "age of machinery," as Carlyle calls it, are quite satisfied with equally simple methods of indicating duration of time. Athet ta-daung, "a breath's space," serves to denote a moment; "the chewing of a fid of betel" occupies ten minutes; "the time it would take to boil one pot of rice," twenty minutes, is well known to everybody where the cooking goes on in the front of the house. These being recognised, the chewing of two betel nuts, the boiling of three pots of rice, do not imply too great an effort of mental arithmetic. The simple rural Burmans understand as little of the English system of horology as they do of the nayas, and bizanas, and pads of the royal astronomers—measures of time which nevertheless appear in all their horoscopes.

Measures of distance are described in equally picturesque language. Thus we have "a stone's throw," from fifty to sixty yards, bests on record with throwing the cricket ball being unknown; "a call," about a couple of hundred yards; "a musket's sound," half an English mile; "morning meal's distance," that is to say, as far as a man could walk between sunrise and breakfast time, say six miles English; a mu, the eighth of a taing, quarter of a mile; a mat, twice as far; "nga mu," literally five mus or half a taing, an English mile.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

They come up singly, in twos, in groups. First a nun, perhaps, walking very softly, clad in her white dress with her beads about her neck, and there in a corner by a little shrine she will spread a cloth upon the hard stones and kneel and bow her face to the great pagoda. And then she will repeat, 'Sorrow, misery, trouble,' over and over again, running her beads through her fingers, repeating the words in the hope that in the end she may understand whither they should lead her. 'Sorrow, misery, trouble'—ah! surely she must know what they mean, or she would not be a nun. And then comes a young man, and after a reverence to the pagoda he goes wandering round, looking for someone, maybe; and then comes an old man with his son. They stop at the little stalls on the stairs, and they have bought there each a candle. The old man has a plain taper, but the little lad must have one with his emblem on it. Each day has its own sign, a tiger for Monday, and so on, and the lad buys a candle like a little rat, for his birthday is Friday, and the father and son go on to the platform. And there they kneel down side by side, the old man and the little chubby lad, and they, too, say that all is misery and delusion. And then they rise and advance to the pagoda's golden base, and put their candles thereon and light them. This side of the pagoda is in shadow now, and so you can see the lights of the candles as little stars.

And then come three girls, sisters, perhaps, all so prettily dressed, with meek eyes, and they, too, buy candles; they, too, kneel and say their prayers, for long, so long, that you wonder if anything has

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

nearly every house there will be a loom, where the wife or daughter weaves for herself or for sale. But many men weave also, and the finest silks are all woven by men. I once asked a woman why they did not weave the best silks, instead of leaving them all to the men.

'Men do them better,' she said, with a laugh. 'I tried once, but I cannot manage that embroidery.'

They also work in the fields—light work, such as weeding and planting. The heavy work, such as ploughing, is done by men. They also work on the roads carrying things, as all Oriental women do. It is curious that women carry always on their heads, men always on their shoulders. I do not know why.

But the great occupation of women is petty trading. I have already said that there are few large merchants among the Burmese. Nearly all the retail trade is small, most of it is very small indeed, and practically the whole of it is in the hands of the women.

Women do not often succeed in any wholesale trade. They have not, I think, a wide enough grasp of affairs for that. Their views are always somewhat limited; they are too penny-wise and pound-foolish for big businesses. The small retail trade, gaining a penny here and a penny there, just suits them, and they have almost made it a close profession.

This trade is almost exclusively done in bazaars. In every town there is a bazaar, from six till ten each morning. When there is no town near, the bazaar will be held on one day at one village and on another at a neighbouring one. It depends on the

342 MAHA-GIRI, is found in nearly every house (a junior member of a
776 family need revere only the symbol of the senior member of a family).
782 A dried coconut with attachment stems is placed in a basket, the top wrapped with a KAUNG-BONG (Head-wrap) of red and white cloth streamers and the basket hung on a nail to the primary corner post of the house. It must be adjusted correctly, and periodically sprinkled with sandlewood water. An interesting story explains the use of the coconut symbol.

713 MAUNG TIN DE, a blacksmith of great powers had two beautiful sisters who he feared would be coveted by the king of the city in which they lived. He asked them for this reason to remain in seclusion. One day he returned from work to find them gone. He became very angry and pounded his anvil till the city shook and the people suffered from earache. For a while he eluded persuit but was finally caught and burned to death. Afterwards he became a powerful nat called MIN MAHA-GIRI with powers of protecting households. Since the coconut signifies coolness and thirst-quenching it came to be offered to the nat who had died from fire.

MIN MAHA-GIRI is consulted if sickness or other misfortunes visit the family. At such times the head of the family checks the coconut offering to make sure it is in good condition. If not this is remedied for much misfortune could be the result of MIN MAHA-GIRI's displeasure at being neglected. When a journey is contemplated he is also appealed to for protection. A lesser nat YON GIN O is in charge of the kitchen and more specifically the hearth. Ko Maung Than knew little of this
[563] nat since it is of minor importance or not considered in Mon households.

342 The home is very important as a place for socio-religious functions
[788] many ceremonies involving groups of people are observed or in part
[574] take place in the house (see below in socio-religious section). Social visiting is also common and much enjoyed. Hospitality, related to but differentiated from charity, gains merit for the host. There is a saying that visitors "come only when the home is pleasant."

512 The home, of course, performs a major "function" as a sleeping
● 805 place, and there are many beliefs and observances in connection with
513 sleep. The evening hours are divided into LU NYAT THET SEIK (children

quiet), the time when the children become quiet, from 7 to 8. 9 to 10 p.m. is known as THAYKYI-KAUNG-CHA (oldage-head-drop) when the elders begin to nod; from 11 to midnight and beyond is LUKLIN-PYAN CHAIN (Bachelors'-return-time) when young men complete their carousing and return to sleep. AYO (dawn) comes at the second cocks'crowing (first is at mid-night) about 4 o'clock. The KALA-DET (Indians-marching in) hollow wooden drum is struck in the phongyi-kyaungs at this time to awaken the village. The women who prepare breakfast, and the old folks who rise to worship appear at this time - but others may sleep on for an hour or so.

It is obligatory to wash the legs and feet before retiring. In warm weather a mat is preferred for coolness - but in colder and damp weather a mattress is considered necessary for protection. Prayers taking from 2 minutes (most) up to considerably longer are generally said before bed-time. These praise Buddha and include such supplications as "may I be lifted up to heaven soon." Dreams may be good or bad according to the disposition of the mats. Certain dreams have meanings applicable as omens. It is during sleep that the ghost of a recently departed loved one contacts the sleeper and, sometimes, succeeds in luring him away permanently.

Analysis of home standard in Pathee and in Refugee Camp.

The Pathee home was in nearly every way superior to refugee camp home. Let us examine the nature of this superiority and attempt to see the adjustment which U Myaing made in the refugee camp. The Pathee home was an independent unit as compared to the refugee camp apartment-like home. However we may not assume that U Myaing found this a disadvantage, since living in Pantanaw was "close". The quarters in the one case were separated by half a dozen feet and on the other by a bamboo partition. An important difference is that the Pathee home was owned by U Myaing and he had inalienable rights there, whereas the refugee camp apartment was loaned to him for a short time period.

Only about one fiftieth of the space was available in the refugee camp (15,000 cubic feet in Pathee, 315 cubic feet in camp.) However,

GLOSSARY

104
804

Measurements:

LET MAH (finger-major) 1st thumb joint, 1 inch.
TA TAUNG (one-tip of finger to elbow) - 1½ feet.
TA LAN (one-distance from finger tips with arms spread to side) about 6 feet.
TA BU (one-tin) condensed milk tin a cylinder 3" high and 2.8" in diameter.
TA BYEE (one-medium basket) 8 BU.
TA DIN (one-big basket) 16 BYEE.

805

Months: The Burmese calendar for 1951-52 is as follows:

TA GU - 7th April - 5th May.
KA SON - 6th May - 4th June.
NA YON - 5th June - 3rd July.
WA SO - 4th July - 2nd August.
WA GAUNG - 3rd August - 31st August.
TAN THA LIN - 1st September - 30th September.
THA DIN GYUT - 1st October - 29th October.
TA ZAUNG MON - 30th October - 28th November.
NA DAW - 29th November - 27th December.
PHYAR THO - 28th December - 27th January.
TA BO DWE - 28th January - 27th February.
TA BAUNG - 28th February - 29th March.

436

Coinage:

Pice (Indian), PI SON (Burmese) - ½ anna.
Anna (Indian), PEH (Burmese) - 1/16th rupee.
Ripee (Indian), CHYAT (Burmese) - 21 American cents.

804

Weights:

Tical - (Indian); HNYAT (Burmese, rupee) 1/100th of a viss.
Viss - (Indian); PE THE (Burmese, viss) - 3.65 pounds.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Though prose and poetry had thus assumed definite forms by about the fourteenth, or early fifteenth century, the drama was unknown until very much later. The first real Burmese drama appeared, though it had its origins some decades earlier, only towards the close of the eighteenth century, and during the next hundred years it developed and then decayed. Burmese dramatic literature developed in a historical sequence and in a way essentially similar to that of the Elizabethan drama. But why the similarity? Is it accident? Is it because of the similarity in the geographical isolation of the two countries? Or, is there a definite way in which all dramas have to develop in natural sequence?

2. Sources of Information

The history of Burmese drama can be divided into six stages. First, there is the age of the *Nibhatkhin*, comparable to the English miracle play, ending about 1752. Second, we have, from 1752 to 1819, the period of the interlude[1] (comparable to the English morality and interlude) and the court drama. Third, we have the period of the dramatist, U Kyin U, 1819 to 1853. Fourth, we have the period of the poet, U Pon Nya, 1853 to 1878. Fifth, there is the period of decadence, 1878 to 1886. Sixth, we have the time from 1886 to the present day. As dates are in many cases uncertain in determining the periods I am taking the reigns of various kings. As the drama depended much on the court and the victories and defeats of the king, perhaps I am justified in so doing. In any case, if a date is wrong, it is wrong by not more than two or three years.

The time before 1752 is the most difficult period as far as research is concerned. The centuries that followed the fall of Pagan—the time of internal wars, 1287 to 1531—saw the rise of a vernacular literature, which is found existing in the Empire of 1531 to 1752.[2]

arranges its extracts in more or less chronological order, and therefore gives a good idea of the development. The subject is outside the scope of this work but I mention it to show how late the first appearance of Burmese drama was as compared with other branches of Burmese literature.

[1] The term 'interlude' is explained in chap. i.

[2] Perhaps it will not be out of place to give a short summary of the history. The various small States into which the country broke up after 1287 gave place, after some fifty years of incessant strife, to Ava, the kingdom of the Burmese, and Pegu, that of the Talaings. The small principality of Toungoo under Ava rebelled and conquered the whole of Burma in 1531.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

have been celebrated year after year, at least since the reintroduction of Buddhism in 1056, and at least since March, 638, when an early king of Pagan, Popa Sawrahan (613–40), drew up the present Burmese era, the dawn of every Burmese new year has been the occasion for mirthful water-throwing.[1]

Buddhism had been introduced into the country through commercial relations with India long before the foundation of the kingdom of Pagan, but from the beginning it was only at second-hand and therefore feeble. The real religion of the Burmese before the reintroduction of Buddhism in 1056 was animistic, and they worshipped various spirits, known as *nats*. There were mediums, mostly women, who danced to please the spirits, and as the spirits were supposed to enter into the bodies of the mediums, sometimes it was believed that the spirits, and not the mediums, were actually dancing. Sometimes the medium herself actually believed that a spirit had taken control of her body, but usually she only pretended that a spirit had entered her, and gave an exhibition of acting. As the medium of each particular *nat* dressed herself in appropriate clothes, the spirit dances were essentially dramatic.[2] When Buddhism, in one of its purest forms, was introduced under Anawrahta, the great king realized the impossibility of attracting people suddenly to the new faith; so he compromised by recognizing the *nats* as Buddhist spirits and giving them shrines in his Shwezigôn Pagoda as its guardian spirits. When asked the reason, Anawrahta replied: 'Men will not come suddenly to the new faith. Let them come for their old gods, and they will gradually be won over.'[3]

So the worship of the *nats* lived on, and with the advance of

[1] Shway-Yoe (Sir George Scott) in *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, and Fielding Hall in *The Soul of a People* give detailed accounts of the feasts and life in the villages. However, as far as I have been able to find out, the Tazaungmôn celebrations have never been described in any English work.

[2] These dances are still performed on spirit-feast days at Taungbyôn (near Mandalay), a small town given up to spirit worship since the days of Pagan's greatness and perhaps even before.

The belief in, as distinct from the worship of, spirits is not alien to Buddhism.

The chief works on the subject are: Sir R. C. Temple, *The Thirty-Seven Nats*; Grant Brown, 'The Taungbyon Festival' in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1915; the same author's 'The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese' in *Folk-Lore*, 1921; and G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*.

[3] G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 33.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

792
792
735

27. SHINLAUNG RENEWING HIS PRAYER.

the world, but not from observation by the world. Great as is the homage accorded to him by the laity, a recluse who should disgrace his cloth—a thing almost unknown — would be promptly unfrocked by them.

For their sustenance the novices and regular recluses depend upon alms. They receive these in kind and according to daily need. Their appeal is mute. The morning after his reception the novice with his brethren will halt in front of his own parents' house and the houses of the neighbours to receive such dole of food as is offered (No. 29). He will not look to right or left, but keep his eyes rooted on the ground, making no sign beyond raising the cover of his alms-bowl. The recluse may not ask for anything whatever, nor even express a predilection. The food, ripe or ready-cooked, as the case may be, is doled indiscriminately into the *thabŏt* from the east side, usually by a woman of the house. A woman should not stand in the shadow of a recluse, of a shrine, *zedi*, temple or image. She should not occupy an upper floor when a recluse happens to be beneath, nor enter a *Thein*, nor occupy a higher place with respect to men (p. 72). Food given in a religious spirit, as above described, is called *sun*. The recluses when collecting *sun* are generally followed by a couple of scholars bearing a yoke and basket to receive larger offerings on behalf of the monastery (No. 41).

[562]
[576]

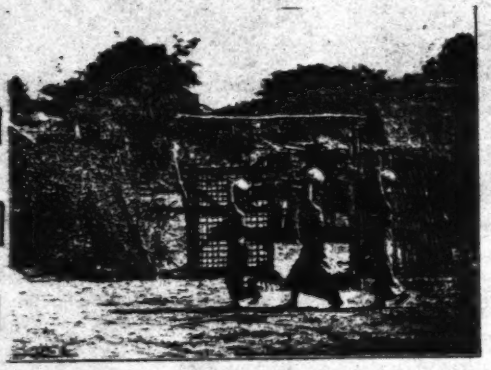
28. GOYIN MAKING OBEISANCE.

792
871
[805]
779
[576]

Those probationers who remain in the monastery for several years—reckoned by Lents (*wa*)—and who aspire to full membership of the Assembly, read with the recluse Pâli texts of the Tripitaka, and the commentaries on these, and commit portions, sometimes whole books of the canon, to memory. Recluses of standing and also laymen take part in these exercises.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

372
262
[312]
[271]
[482]
252
[805]



137. CARRYING HOME THE WATER-POTS.

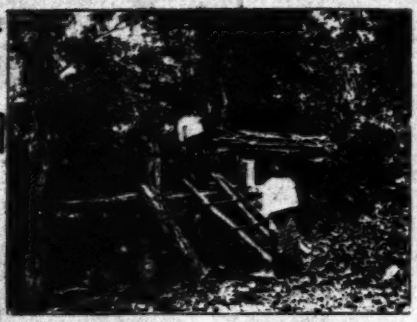
fuel is required only for cooking and in manufactures.

Rice is the staple of every meal, except in the dry zone. The millet and sorghum which there take the place of rice are cooked in the same way but need longer boiling. "A rice-boiling" (*ta-ò-dyét*) is the common phrase for an interval of about twenty minutes. After washing in several waters, rice is put to boil in an earthen pot with enough water to cover it, and boiled till the grains are quite clear. The rice-water is poured off, and the rice is put back on the fire to steam. Rice is cooked fresh for every meal and is eaten hot. A relish is made to eat with the rice, consisting of a watery stew of fresh greens or of pulse. The fat used is sesamum oil (*hnan-zí*). This curry is seasoned with turmeric (*sanwín*), capsicum (*ngayòtthi*—chilli), and either salt-fish or *ngapi* (p. 92). Fresh fish, prawns, or meat are added if available. In default of cultivated vegetables, wild greens of all sorts, bamboo-shoots and sprouting leaves, are used. Pickles of lime and other fruits are used as separate relishes. There are two meals in the day, both of the same nature. The morning meal is eaten at about nine o'clock, the other before dark. Meals are taken by the household in common. The housewife or daughter gets mats ready in the *kyaunding* and places in the centre a *byat*—a large, deep, wooden platter, lacquered red—into which she turns out the cooked rice (*tamín*). In the middle of the rice is set a bowl with the curry and a spoon. The family squat round the *byat*, or if a large household round several.

[263]
264
415
[271]

138. STAND FOR THE DRINKING-WATER.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



140. FETCHING IN FUEL.

In the villages the passing traveller is invited to join in the meal. Everyone in turn ladles gravy from the bowl on the rice in front of him and mixes and eats it with his fingers. Before and after eating, mouth and fingers are rinsed. After the meal a drink of water is taken. Fruit is eaten after meals and at odd times. The importation of delf crockery and enamelled ware has been going on for a long time.

Betel (*kun*) is taken at all times except at meals, and tobacco is smoked by men, women, and children (No. 21). The betel-box plays the same part in Burman sociality as the snuff-box still does in parts of Europe. The chew of betel is made up of the fresh leaf of the betel-vine (*kun-yuèt*, No. 409) smeared with moist slaked lime (*thòn*) and folded over slices of the nut of the areca or betel palm. Dried tobacco-leaf, cutch and spices—cinnamon and cloves—are frequently added. "A betel-chewing" is a common phrase for about a quarter of an hour. Old people who have lost their teeth pound up the betel in a small brass mortar (*kun-dyeik*) for chewing. The spittoon (*tuk-gan*) is indispensable.

The native tea is prepared by hill-tribes of the North. It is either in dry balls the size of a fist (*sin-chí*) or loose (*leppétchauk*), or is pickled (*leppétkkan*). The dry tea is infused in the Chinese fashion (*leppéyye*, No. 146).

When the platters have been rinsed after the evening meal and the tables put by—*sabwè-hmauk*—which gives the name to the hour, the day's work is over and the young women smarten themselves up to receive their *banar*. The chief toilet-requisite is the face-powder (*than-ákkú*)—the cream-coloured bark

141. GETTING FIRE BY THE NATIVE METHOD.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

302
512
883
[805]
[271]

Having made her evening toilet

148. TEA (LEPPEYYE).

the girl takes some light work, such as cotton to roll for the wheel for the hour of *Inbyè-hlè*, as the dusk of evening is called, literally, the time of the "bachelors' round." The young men are expected to make short calls only, so as not to keep the old people up late. By "old men's sleeping time," as the hour after the short twilight is called, they must have left, so as to relieve the duenna, who, if not in sight, is always in waiting for the girls to come up into the house for the night. Courtship has quite a language of its own in which the suitor needs to be proficient. Young people of fashion are referred to as *kdla-thú, kdla-thamí*—lads and girls "of the period," who cultivate smartness in their speech, bearing and dress. The suitor brings presents of flowers and fruit and ornaments. Oranges, expensively stored one by one, long past the season, are for this sole purpose. Carved

883
[198]
431
538

302

147. BELLE AT HER TOILET.

149. VILLAGE BELLE.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

412. SNAKE-CHARMER'S PERFORMANCE.

cremation of the *yahán*. Burmese New-Year—moon-change at *Tagú*—falls in April, as the sun enters the sign of Aries. The calendar has been regulated on the Brahman model with intercalary days and months (Appendix E). New-Year marks the greatest crisis in the seasons; the heat has reached its climax, to drop abruptly at the break of the south-west monsoon. Now is the time of drought; many of the wells are empty, and water has to be fetched from a distance. There is no greater luxury than abundance of water at this season; water is the most seasonable offering, and great supplies are stored in the jars at the *kyaungs*. In a symbolic spirit, water is poured over the images of the Buddha. But the great feature of the New-Year festival is the burlesque of these libations. In the true spirit of the carnival, the women douse the men, and the men douse the women, all regardless of their festal attire. The young women in particular wait in ambush for the gallants, perhaps to be caught in a second ambush by some urchin. The liberty of water-throwing lasts for the days of *akyó*, *akyá*, *akyát*, and *aték*, the stages of the journey which a *thadyá* makes from heaven to earth to see the works of men if they be good. The legend is probably derived from the Hindu myth of the rain-god Indra, to whom water is offered at the season of his expected descent. A religious feature of the festival is the ransom of cattle. An animal kept for slaughter by the Indian Musulman butcher is borrowed and gaily decked out, with its horns gilded. It is led round the village or quarter of the town, followed by a festive throng, and contributions are gathered until the price of the animal is made up, when it is set free at the *kyaung* to be an evidence of goodwill to all things living.

413. NEW-YEAR FETE (PAYA-YE-CHO).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

APPENDIX E.

805

MEASURES.

TIME.

Obsolete	10 fillips (*kanat*)	= 1 *hyan*
	6 *hyan*	= 1 *hnaṅa*.
	60 *hnaṅa*	= 1 hour (*nayi*).
	60 hours	= 1 day (*ne*).
	30 days	= 1 month (*la*).
	12 months	= 1 year (*hnit*).

[177] Since the introduction of clocks and watches the old day of sixty *nayi* has become obsolete and the day of twenty-four hours universal. The days of the week are named after the sun, moon, and planets, correspondingly to our own. The month is divided into the waxing (*lazàn*) and the waning (*labyidyaw*) moon of fifteen days each, alternately with months of fifteen days waxing and fourteen days waning. Seven years in every nineteen admit an intercalar month of thirty days. In leap years the month *Wàzò* is repeated under the name *Dútiya Wàzò*.

The months correspond more or less with our months, as follows :—

1. *Kasòn*	30 days,	April to May.	7. *Tasaungmòn*	30 days,	October to November.
2. *Nayòn*	29 ,,	May to June.	8. *Nadèw*	29 ,,	November to December.
3. *Wasò*	30 ,,	June to July.	9. *Pyatò*	30 ,,	December to January.
4. *Wàgaung*	29 ,,	July to August.	10. *Tabòdwè*	29 ,,	January to February
5. *Tawthalin*	30 ,,	August to September.	11. *Tabòdaung*	30 ,,	February to March.
6. *Thadingyùt*	29 ,,	September to October.	12. *Tagù*	29 ,,	March to April.

The present era (*thagayit*) commenced in 638 A.D. Thus the year 1900 A.D. is the Burmese year 1261–62.

LENGTH.

804

4 grains of rice = 1 finger-breadth (*latattkit*).
8 *thit* = 1 *mait* (breadth of palm with thumb extended, 6 inches).
12 *thit* = 1 *twe* (span, 9 inches).
2 *twe* = 1 *daung* (cubit, 18 inches).
7 *daung* = 1 *tè*.
500 *tè* = *ngayu-dain* (one mile, 1609·33 *metres*).
1000 *tè* = 1 *daing*.
6400 *tè* = 1 *yòdana* (obsolete).

6 grains = 1 thumb (inch, *lemma*).
2 *mait* = 1 *pè* (foot, 12 inches, 30·5 c.m.).
4 *daung* = 1 *dàm* (spear, fathom, 6 feet).

CAPACITY.

				Burm.
1 *sali*	(sixty-fourth)	1 pint		0·567
4 *sali*	= 1 *byi* (sixteenth)	2 quarts		
2 *byi*	= 1 *sayè* (eighth)	1 gallon		4·543
2 *sayè*	= 1 *sait* (quarter)	2 gallons		
2 *sait*	= 1 *gwè* (half)	4 ,,		
2 *gwè*	= 1 *dòn* (basket)	8 ,,		36·346